

AN ACT concerning military and veterans courts.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Military and Veterans Courts Act.

Section 5. Purposes. The General Assembly recognizes that military members and military veterans may have certain service-related conditions that may apply in a court of law. There is a critical need for a military and veterans justice system that will take into account service-related mental health problems as well as circumstances surrounding deployment. It is the intent of the General Assembly to create a Military and Veterans Court Task Force to investigate and develop a statutory basis for a specialized military and veterans court system with the necessary flexibility to meet unique service-related problems in the State of Illinois. The General Assembly recognizes that the use and abuse of alcohol or drugs, mental health conditions, and problematic social interactions that affect and confront some veterans and members of the armed services on active duty have a dramatic effect on the justice system in the State of Illinois. There is a critical need for a military and veterans justice system program that will recognize and address the unique problems and

circumstances faced by veterans and members of the armed forces on active duty and the legal issues that are impacted by those problems and circumstances so as to reduce the incidence of violence, drug use, drug addiction, alcohol use, alcohol addiction, mental health conditions, and crimes committed by some veterans and members of the armed services on active duty. It is the intent of the General Assembly to create the Military and Veterans Court Task Force to address these challenges facing the State of Illinois.

Section 10. Task Force established.

(a) There is established the Military and Veterans Court Task Force.

(b) The Governor's Office shall provide administrative support to the Task Force as needed.

Section 15. Membership; chair; meetings; quorum.

(a) The Military and Veterans Court Task Force shall be appointed as follows:

One member appointed by the Governor;

One member appointed by the Attorney General;

One member appointed by the President of the Senate;

One member appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate;

One member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

One member appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives;

One member, with experience with the Veterans Court in Cook County, appointed by the Chief Judge of the Circuit Court in Cook County;

One member, with experience with the Veterans Court in Madison County, appointed by the Chief Judge of the Third Judicial Circuit;

One member, with experience with the John Marshall Law School's Veterans Legal Support Center and Clinic, appointed by the Dean of the John Marshall Law School;

One member, with experience with the Southern Illinois University School of Law's Veterans' Legal Assistance Program, appointed by the Dean of the School of Law of Southern Illinois University; and

One member appointed by the Dean of the College of Law at the University of Illinois.

(b) The member appointed by the Governor shall serve as the chair of the Task Force.

(c) The Task Force members shall receive no salary for serving, but shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred as a result of their duties as members of the Task Force from funds appropriated by the General Assembly for that purpose, or from funds obtained from sources other than the General Assembly.

(d) A majority of the members of the Task Force shall

constitute a quorum.

(e) The Task Force shall study and recommend to the General Assembly a system of military and veterans courts, which shall supplement and not replace the existing court system. The Task Force shall make recommendations consistent with the goal that the military and veterans courts can be established on or after June 1, 2010. The Task Force shall make its report to the General Assembly on or before November 1, 2009.

(f) The Task Force shall meet at least once every 2 weeks, and more frequently as necessary, at the call of the chair, and shall report its findings to the General Assembly as expeditiously as possible. Task Force meetings shall be held in a manner to accommodate participation by members in person or by use of telecommunication technology.

(g) Task Force recommendations shall take effect upon the effective date of a Public Act that enacts them.

(h) The Task Force is abolished June 1, 2010.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.